

**Lic. José Alejandro Córdoba**

Procurador de los Derechos Humanos  
Office of the Ombudsman for Human Rights  
Procuraduría de los Derechos Humanos  
12 avenida 12-54, zona 1.  
Ciudad de Guatemala  
GUATEMALA

January 11, 2024

Dear Procurador Córdoba:

We are writing to ask for an update on the investigation into the killing of **Noé Gómez Barrera**. The well-respected 69-year old Xinka Indigenous community leader was assassinated in Jutiapa on October 28, 2023. He was a member of the ancestral authorities of the Xinka Parliament of Guatemala. Since 2002 he fought for Xinka rights in Jutiapa against the company Renewable Energy Alternative (Alternativa de Energía Renovable).

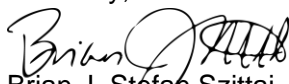
This act of violence takes place in the context of violence, threats and heightened security risks for human rights and environmental defenders in the Xinka territories of Jutiapa, Santa Rosa and Jalapa. During recent years, the Xinka people have maintained a broad and ongoing struggle to defend their health, water, forests, lands, and territory against the threat of megaprojects including the Renewable Energy Alternative company, as well as the Escobal mine owned by Canadian mining company Pan American Silver. For their commitment to the defense of collective rights, the Xinka people have faced intimidation, defamation, criminalization, attacks, and assassinations.

In a letter to the US State Department in September 2023, 13 members of the US House of Representatives expressed concern for the security of the Xinka people. The legislators called for the State Department to play an active role to ensure an effective response to any further acts of repression against the Xinka people. And since October, the Ancestral Indigenous Authorities of Guatemala have requested precautionary measures from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) given the risks they face for exercising their rights.

We strongly urge that your government:

- conduct a thorough and transparent investigation into the assassination of Noé Gómez Barrera, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice
- work with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) to grant precautionary measures to protect the Ancestral Indigenous Authorities, especially the five Xinka leaders who requested precautionary measures from the IACHR in 2021
- publicly denounce acts of violence against Ancestral Indigenous Authorities

Sincerely,



Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-coordinators



Christine Stonebraker Martínez

copies: Licda. María Consuelo Porras Argueta, Attorney General / Fiscal General de la República ~ via email  
Alfonso José Quiñónez Lemus, Ambassador of Guatemala to the US ~ via email and US mail  
Dr. Ramiro Alejandro Contreras Escobar, Executive Director of COPADEH: Comisión Presidencial por la Paz y los Derechos Humanos  
IACHR: Andrea Pochak, Rapporteur for Guatemala, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email and US mail  
IACHR: Anif Bulkan, Rapporteur for Indigenous Peoples, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email and US mail  
OACNUDH: Mika Kanervavuori, Oficina del Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Derechos Humanos en Guatemala (OACNUDH) ~ via email  
US State Department: William Popp, US Ambassador to Guatemala ~ via email  
US State Department: Guatemala Desk Officers in Washington, DC: Doug Choi, Moises Mendoza ~ via email  
US Senators Brown & Vance ~ via email  
US Representatives Beatty, Brown, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Miller, Sykes ~ via email

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**The following people hereby urge you to take action on this matter as indicated in this letter:**